regard a meeting was convened by Secretary (Coal) with the Council of Power Utilities and a arrangement has been evolved in principle according to which coal would be sampled by the same sampling agency at the loading end and at the unloading end. The concerned SEBs and coal companies would decided the agency which could be entrusted with the work of sampling of coal. The agencies for carrying out sampling of coal both loading and unloading end has since been identified. It is now for the individual power house including that of Gujarat Electricity Board and the coal companies to work out the ground details.

सिंगरेनी कोलियरीज कंपनी लि० के कर्मचारियों और श्रमिकों की बहाली

2139. **श्री बलवंत सिंह रामूवालिया:** क्या कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सिंगरेनी कोलियरीज कंपनी लि० ने अपने यहां कर्मचारियों और श्रमिकों को स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति योजना के अंतर्गत सेवानिवृत्त करने का निर्णय किया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति योजना की विस्तृत रूपरेखा क्या है; और

(ग) क्या कंपनी ने अतिरिक्त कर्मचारियों और श्रमिकों की संख्या के संबंध में अनुमान लगाया है; यदि हां, तो उनकी संख्या कितनी है?

कोयला मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री दिलीप राय): (क) और (ख) सिंगरेनी कोलियरीज कंपनी लि० में कोल इंडिया लि० के समान कोई स्वैच्छिक सेवा-निवृत्ति योजना नहीं है। किन्तु, मजदूर यूनियनों के साथ दिनांक 29.1.1981 को किए गए समझौते के ज्ञापन के आधार पर कंपनी में "स्वास्थ्य आधार पर स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति" योजना है। इस योजना के अंतर्गत, वृद्ध और निर्बल श्रमिक यदि चिकित्सा बोर्ड द्वारा सेवा के लिए अक्षम पाए जाएं, तो उक्त श्रमिक अपने एक आश्रित पुरुष सदस्य को, आरोग्यता और रिक्तियों की उपलब्धता की शर्त पर भूमिगत खान में रोजगार दिलवा सकते हैं।

(ग) 1998-99 हेतु सिं० को० कं० लि० में अधिशेष श्रमशक्ति का एक अस्थायी आकलन किया गया था और 5,087 कर्मचारी अधिशेष पाए गए हैं।

Financial Position of Singareni Collieries

2140. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) action taken to strengthen the financial position of Singareni Collieries;

(b) the outstanding dues pending in that collieries; and

(c) the suggestion put forth to clear the dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) The Central Government have taken the following measures to strengthen the financial position of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL):

(i) Deregulation of pricing of A, B & C grades of non-coking coal w.e.f. 22.3.96 and deregulation of the pricing of D grade of non-coking coal w.e.f. 12.3.97.

(ii) Allowing SCCL to revise the prices of E, F & G grades of non-coking coal till 1.1.2000 once in every six months by updating the cost indices as per the escalation formula contained in the report sbumitted by BICP in 1987.

(iii) Investment of Rs. 458.00 crores as equity (including conversion of loan amounting to Rs. 402 crores) during the VIII Plan.

(iv) Extension of a loan of Rs. 49.52 crores during VIII Plan period.

(v) Extension of bilateral credit of Rs. 403.84 crores during VIII Plan period.

During 1997-98 Government of India have invested Rs. 80.22 crores as equity and extended Rs. 77.50 crores as loan and Rs. 40.7 crores as bilateral credit.

(b) The total amount of SCCL pending against all classes of customers for supplies of coal from its collieries, as on 31.3.1998 is Rs. 470.40 crores (including interest for belated payment of Rs. 105.55 crores).

(c) SCCL has been making constant efforts to realise the outstanding dues, also seeking intervension of the State Government for realisation of such dues wherever necessary.

Discussions with WTO on Import/Export measures

2141. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the purport of recent discussions that have taken place with the World Trade Organisation on import regulatory and export promotion measures considered imperative by Government in the national interest;

(b) whether attempts are on the part of the WTO to "frontload" the enforcement of some of the provisions of the Marrakesh Treaty that, according to the Government's judgement, are postponeable till the final year of the period of adjustment, namely, 2005; and

(c) whether any progress has been achieved to regroup the NAM countries to resist the over bearingness of the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) During the recently concluded Meeting for India's Trade Policy Review (held during 16-17 April 1998), India, inter-alia, explained the main features of its trade regime, including the trade reglatory and promotional measures. India's trading partners appreciated India's continued programme of economic reforms, including trade reforms and welcomed India's positive participation in the WTO.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Government has been in consultation with like-minded countries such as the G-15 and the SAARC Groups, for the purpose of devising appropriate strategies to gain maximum benefits from membership of WTO.

Decline in Exports

2142. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the volume of exports declined gradually after February this year with foreign countries;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the percentage of the country's exports during the corresponding period last year; and

(d) what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Sir, as per the available data after February, 1998, the quantity of exports in respect of commodities like coffee, pulses, rice guergum meal, finished leather, leather footweat components, Dyes/intermediates and coal tar chemicals and ferro alloys increased, exports of commodities like tea, wheat spices, other cereals, sugar and mollases, sesame and niger seed, groundnuts, shellac, marine products, cotton raw incl. waste, iron ore, inorganic/Organic/Agro Chemicals, Jute and Jute manufactures, Paints/emamels/varnishes etc., Aluminium other than products, and Iron and steel Bar/Rod etc., have declined during march of April, 98. As per the provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), the export values registered a growth rate of 2.9% in Dollar terms and 7.2% in Rupee terms during April-Feb., 1997-98 over the corresponding period last year. During April-March, 1997-98 the export values registered a growth rate of 1.5% in Dollar terms and 6.3% in Rupee terms over the corresponding period last year.

(b) Export performance is influenced inter-alia by international market conditions, export competitiveness of domestic